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WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

To Prevent a Greater Harm: Necessity Defense to be Argued by Local Anti-War Activists

by State vs Herrera-Imani Defense Team

On Jan. 26, Pierce County District Court Judge Margaret Vail Ross issued a ruling granting two anti-war activists the right to present a "necessity defense" in their upcoming trial. Brianna Emma Herrera (Seattle) and Patricia Imani (Olympia), represented by civil rights attorney Larry Hildes, intend to present such a defense when the case goes to trial April 21-22 in Pierce County District Court in Tacoma. (The trial was rescheduled soon into the first attempt at trial, in January, when a potential conflict with a juror was presented to the court. Because an alternate juror was not available, Judge Ross made the appropriate decision to call a mistrial and reschedule.)

The Jan. 26 ruling is just the third time in Washington State history that the defense has been allowed by the courts, though many within the anti-nuclear and anti-war movements have sought the defense in civil disobedience cases.

The rationale behind the necessity defense is that in order to prevent a greater harm a technical breach of law (in this case, disorderly conduct) is more advantageous to society than the consequence of strict adherence to the law (in this case, war crimes, crimes against peace and crimes against humanity).

Herrera and Imani were arrested in August 2008 while participating in non-violent civil resistance at separate planned actions near the gates of Fort Lewis. Direct actions through human blockades were taken to delay the refitting and redeployment of combat vehicles used in the US occupation of Iraq. The combat vehicles, recently redeployed to Iraq, were with the 4th-2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team based at Fort Lewis.

Direct actions to resist the illegal aggressive wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have taken place since May of 2006 in association with Port Militarization Resistance efforts. As written by Marco Rosairre Rossi in a June 2006 *Works in Progress* article, A Call for Direct Action Against the War, "Their actions, though technically violations of minor local laws... are fully protected under international law. The Nuremberg Trials clearly laid down the principle that citizens not only have a right, but a duty, to disobey and resist the laws of regimes that ignore international law. The United States government, without any doubt, is such a regime...The actions of the activists who were arrested may not be congruent with local laws, but they are in full compliance with international laws, and in so far as those laws have been ratified by the United States government, they are also in compliance with the US Constitution. If anything, these activists are law-abiding global citizens who are trying to hold accountable the largest organized crime syndicate in the world: the United States government."

Defendants, their supporters, and the legal team rally outside the courtroom after a mistrial is declared. Photo by Berd Whitlock.

Key defense witnesses for the Herrera-Imani trial will include Daniel Ellsberg, the noted US military analyst employed by the RAND Corporation who was responsible for the release of the Pentagon Papers to *The New York Times* in 1971. The act of releasing the classified documents was technically illegal, but the act of civil resistance turned public sentiment against the Vietnam war, ultimately encouraging an end to the war. Also testifying for the defense will be Seth Manzel, a local Iraq War Veteran. Manzel is founder of the non-profit organization GI Voice and member of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW).

The State vs Herrera-Imani Defense team is continuing to seek donations in order to cover the basic costs of the trial. If you can help, donations can be made payable to "P.O. LEGAL DEFENSE FUND" and mailed to PO BOX 295, Olympia, WA 98507.

New Olympia City Councilmembers Show Strength on Isthmus Issue

by Janine Gates

Community members packed into the city council chamber on January 5th for the council's first meeting of the year, and not only witnessed the swearing in of newly elected councilmembers Stephen Buxbaum, Karen Rogers, Jeannine Roe along with Joe Hyer (re-elected), but also witnessed a democratically choreographed coup of sorts.

After public comment by 14 citizens and other business, councilmembers Buxbaum, Rogers and Roe led the effort to begin reversing the efforts of the previous council regarding the fate of the controversial isthmus area in downtown Olympia.

With three stunning motions, which all passed, the newly reconstituted council accomplished more for many citizen activists in one meeting than in a whole year of trying to work with the previous council on isthmus-related issues. (See previous articles in *Works In Progress* or review Janine's coverage of the Isthmus at www.janineslittlehollywood.blogspot.com)

In what was an obviously well-planned, coordinated approach, Councilmember Stephen Buxbaum began by requesting a motion for city staff to bring back, next week, an interim rezone agreement to revert the zoning on the isthmus to what it was prior to January 1, 2009, have it remain in effect through the completion of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and have staff select a date for a public hearing on the ordinance within 45 days.

> Rogers said, "In 1972, the state created a shoreline master plan for a reason. Shorelines are special. They belong to the whole state. They didn't quite trust local governments to (safeguard them)."

Councilmember Roe seconded the motion. Councilmember Hyer said he would support the motion but would ask for an executive session before the next meeting to discuss potential legal issues. The vote passed unanimously after clarifications and discussion.

Then, Councilmember Karen Rogers made a motion to withdraw the city's limited Shoreline Master Plan amendment request to the state Department of Ecology for the isthmus area. Councilmember Buxbaum seconded the motion.

A letter to the city dated June 10, 2009 from Gordon White, manager for Ecology's Shorelands and Environmental Assistance program, essentially kicks the amendment back to the city, and expresses Ecology's difficulties in processing the city's request. Pursuing the application and answering Ecology's questions would require significant city staff time to provide more information.

The motion passed unanimously after some discussion.

Councilmember Strub, looking stunned at the relatively swift passage of the previous motions, actually did not express a verbal "yea" or "nay" vote on either of the motions. Her vote, however, was registered as a "yea" since she did not abstain, Mayor Mah explained to this reporter later.

Council cooperation dissipated after Councilmember Jeannine Roe made a motion to direct the city manager to submit a letter to the Legislature, conveying the council's endorsement of Senator Karen Fraser's SB5800 and its companion bill HB 2081. Councilmember Buxbaum seconded the motion.

"I'd like to go all the way with you...but I cannot do this...I can't agree because this bill is a usurpation of our local authority. We have the right to make determinations," said Councilmember Strub after Roe's mo-

▸ **CITY COUNCIL,** continued on page 5

Councilmember Rhenda Strub (left), helps newly elected councilmember Stephen Buxbaum, and Councilmember Craig Ottavelli helps Councilmember Jeannine Roe. Terry Gregerson, (middle), of the IT department, most likely helps all of them. Photo by Janine Gates.

Design board denies Triway plan

By Janine Gates

In yet another victory for opponents of Triway Enterprises' plan to build a massive housing and mixed-use office building project on the isthmus in downtown Olympia, the city's Design Review Board, at their Jan. 28th meeting, passed a motion by 7 - 2 to recommend denial of the applicant's plan for the project.

The denial of the plan went against a city staff recommendation to approve the project. Board members based their decision, in part, on the project's failure to meet city code criteria regarding the visual context of the streetscape and its lack of human scale.

The board picked up their conversation right where it left off on December 18, 2009, when it tabled a decision on the context plan. (See articles on December 11 and December 18, 2009 at www.janineslittlehollywood.blogspot.com for more information.) Individual board members had not changed their minds nor did they offer new reasons or explanations for their positions.

The motion to deny the plan was offered by board member Jane Laclergue. Board chair Thomas Carver and board member Spencer Daniels were in the minority. Daniels felt that the denial would "second guess" the previous city council's zoning decision.

Carver said that although he felt that the rezone was a clear "spot rezone," he felt that the applicant met all the requirements. "I

▸ **DESIGN BOARD,** continued on page 5

Works In Progress

Works In Progress is a free, volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions
Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

We value well-researched pieces that cover news stories that would be informative to readers in the South Sound. We value news and analysis over opinion pieces. We value submissions on stories that are misrepresented or ignored by mainstream media.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress*, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

Send submissions to *olywip@gmail* or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

Governing Tool
The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

WIP *will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by* WIP *to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but* WIP *reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

Mission Statement
"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. *Works In Progress* is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause
We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues
Some issues are held in the Timberland Library system. *WIP* is archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

Workers In Progress

Colby Batts, Brandon Berryhill, Janet Blanding, Dave Campbell, Marylea Coday, Mike Coday, Renee Cruickshank, Wally Cuddeford, Christian DesMarets, Brendan Funtek, Teresa Jennings, Margaret Love, Joshua Neuhouser, hali panneton, Sandia Slaby, Sylvia Smith, Jeff Sowers, Pat Tassoni, Ryan Tompkins, Berd Whitlock, Scott Yoos, and room for more...

Cover photo: Howard Zinn Speaks at Marlboro College, February 17, 2004
Photo by Jared Benedict - See more photos by Jared Benedict at http://www.flickr.com/photos/redjar/ or at www.redjar.org

WIP Schedule

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Any dictator would admire the uniformity and obedience of the US media. N Chomsky

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ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS

WORKS IN PROGRESS LOOKING FOR DISTRIBUTORS

Works in Progress is looking for distributors to help complete some of our routes. We are a volunteer staff, unified together under the passion for alternative media. Recently, a number of long-time distributors have had to retire due to health problems, or just because they're moving out of town.

Please consider joining us as a distributor to drop off papers at various points throughout Olympia or the greater region if you have the means. Leave a message for Sandia at 360-970-2206 if you are interested in joining us. We're also privy to suggestions of places our paper has neven been distributed. Thanks for reading!

20 YEARS OF WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works in Progress is preparing for its 20th anniversary issue this coming May in grand style. Look to this spring and beyond for related fundraisers, collaboration with other local alternative media and other fun stuff.

We're seeking all past authors and long-time readers of WIP to share your perspective of the paper with us. If you have frequently written for us, we would love to hear again from you soon. We would also love to have a graphic designer and website coordinator work with us on our one-time project of releasing the 20th anniversary issue in print and online. Contact olywip@gmail.com to join us for this momentuous event.

Howard Zinn Celebration of Life Memorial

Saturday, Feb. 6, 3-5:15 p.m.. Lecture Hall 1, The Evergreen State College

Dear Friends,

Many of you have been influenced by Howard Zinn and read or even worked with his People's History of the United States. He had planned to speak here in Olympia, Saturday, Feb. 6, at 3 p.m. but passed away last week. He'd be delighted to know people will gather to consider the people's history and tell the people's stories that day anyway.

Come honor and celebrate Zinn's life and work at The Evergreen State College Saturday Feb. 6 from 3-5:15 in Lecture Hall 1. The program will feature a recent interview of Zinn with David Barsamian and a recording of the address "Three Holy Wars" that Zinn had promised to bring to Olympia. Local educators and activists and artists will testify to the ways that Howard Zinn has touched their lives and work. We will close with music, led by David Rovics

The event is free. Donations will be collected in Howard Zinn's name to fund peace and justice work here in the US and in Haiti.

For more information, contact Larry Mosqueda, 867-6513.

From the committee organizing the Howard Zinn Celebration of Life Memorial, Jana Dean, Sandy Yannone, Victoria Larkin, Larry Mosqueda and Pete Bohmer.

Playback Theatre Performance: Stories of Our Heart's Desire feat. The Thunders

Friday, Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m., Traditions - 300 5th Ave. SW (downtown Olympia),

Suggested donation $5.00-$10.00. (No one is turned away)

Each month we invite a guest artist, community organization, arts program or social service agency to be a part of our performance. Through this collaboration we acknowledge and honor the work individuals and organizations do in our community.

This month we are featuring the Thunders, an ensemble of young adult actors who have taken Playback Theatre workshops with the Heartsparkle Players.

Playback Theatre is a spontaneous collaboration between performers and audience. People tell moments from their lives, then watch them re-created with movement, music and dialogue.

Contact Debe at 360-943-6772 or debek@olywa.net. Check out heartsparkle.org also.

Celebrate the Fifth Year Anniversary of the Pizza Time Strike

Come out to remember workers struggling for better working conditions in Olympia.

Meet Friday Feb. 12 at noon at 4th and Jefferson in downtown Olympia to show support for local workers.

Visit olympiaworkers.net for more info.

Check out Pizza Time Strike history at:

olympiaworkers.blogspot.com/2009/02/olympia-workers-pizza-time-strike.html

Community Café — a conversation on the theme of immigration

Sunday, Feb. 21, 12:30-3 p.m., First United Methodist Church of Olympia, 1224 Legion Way SE (downstairs)

"Awakening and engaging collective wisdom through conversations about questions that matter."

Enjoy a simple meal (provided) and make new friends while holding up a light to your thoughts and feelings. We might tell personal stories about immigration in a small group and reap the harvest of our collective wisdom when we reassemble in the larger group. Come up with questions which may lead to new ways of thinking about immigration.

To find out more about community cafés, visit: theworldcafe.com. Childcare and Spanish translation provided. Other language interpretation upon request. Contact Scott, scotts@scattercreek.com or 360-943-5804. We welcome your RSVP.

Iran's Green Movement: The New Civil Rights Struggle - A Panel Discussion

Thursday, Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m., Lecture Hall 1 at The Evergreen State College

Panelists will include Columbia professor Dr. Hamid Dabashi, author of "Iran: A People Interrupted," who will give a brief history of the Iranian civil rights movement; Shadi Mokhtari, author of "Abu Ghraib: Exploring Human Rights in America and the Middle East," who will discuss the state of human rights in Iran; and Dr. Trita Parsi, president of National Iranian American Council and author of "Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dialogue of Iran, Israel and the United States," who will discuss US foreign policy toward Iran and how the civil rights movement will influence greater Middle East politics.

POWER Outage - Potluck & conversation about reproductive justice

March 1, 5:30-8 p.m.,
First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE

POWER Outage is a monthly get-together in Olympia for POWER (Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights) and community members. It happens on the first Monday of every month and starts at 5:30 p.m., with a potluck followed by a meeting.

This month, we will look at a historical timeline that exposes practices—from slavery, to legislation, to birth control testing, to immigration laws—that have resulted in reproductive oppression on marginalized communities.

POWER is an organization of low-income parents and allies advocating for a strong social safety net while working toward a world where children and caregiving are truly valued, and the devastation of poverty has been eradicated.

For more information, contact POWER at (360) 352-9716, toll free at 1-866-343-9716, or email welfare-rights@riseup.net. Child care will be provided.

A Green Economy: A series of discussions for the community

Multiple days, multiple locations

You are invited to participate in a series of community discussions on the economy, presented by the Green Party of South Puget Sound. The 12 sessions will explore not only the current financial crisis but the underlying conditions that led to it. We will try to better understand what we need to go forward to a secure future, with not only a tamed Big Finance sector, but a whole way of life that sustains us, our physical world, and our community.

The first topic, "A world of limited resources," will be covered by sessions on Feb. 16 and 22, which will include a presentation by Evergreen professor Peter Dorman.

The second topic, "The economic woes of ordinary people," will be covered by sessions on Feb. 28 and Mar. 6, which will include screenings of the films *Zeitgeist* and *Money as Debt*.

Future topics will include "The Wall Street casino running amok," "Regulating Wall Street," "Creating a sustainable society," and "Taking action"

All sessions are free and open to all. Each session stands alone. Please attend any and all that interest you. For info on the March and April sessions, visit www.greenparty-sps.net, or pick up next month's **Works in Progress**.

For exact times, dates, and locations for each session, or for more information on the series, visit www.greenparty-sps.net, or call Janet at 360-352-0779.

WIP LETTERS

A letter to the Works In Progress staff

I have lived in Oly for about 12 years and have been picking up and reading WIP at local venues. I wanted to take a minute to let you know i have always found WIP intriguing and informative on local issues. Your December 2009 issue is excellent. In particular, the cover article by Joshua Neuhouser, supporting article by Nigel Weiss, and Erik Shutvet's *very* informative article on Afghanistan were well written. In an era of a declining written press, your paper is a paradigm.

Looking forward to the next edition,
Dan Stockert
Olympia

And an Open Letter to the President

Dear President Barack Obama,

I voted for an energized, engaged movement for socio-political change in 2008. I voted for your name, but not necessarily for you as a personality, even though I would support a Democratic Party candidate generally. My intent was to be part of a movement. I think the nascent movement is not being supported, and it is failing. The Old Guard is still running our country.

I don't know that I'll even vote for president in 2012. You haven't earned my vote, and I do not vote for people who don't earn my vote (yes..."no matter the consequences"). You have failed in your first year to create change; to be the bully pulpit spark plug for political change. You are being controlled by your adversaries, within and without government, including your own political party.

Unless I see successful leadership and dramatic public policy change at the national level, I'm done supporting Democrats in national elections. Do something significant, or go away.

Curt Pavola,
Olympia, WA
Former local "Democrat of the Year"
Former Democratic Party precinct committee officer
Former elected Olympia city councilmember
Former advocate for legal equality for affectional minorities (LGBT community)
Former campaign worker on federal, state, and local campaigns (1980 to 2001)
Budding young-ish Grumpy Old Man

The Olympia Free Herbal Clinic is open again!

The Clinic has a new office space in downtown Olympia.

Our open hours are:

Tuesdays 3 to 7 pm
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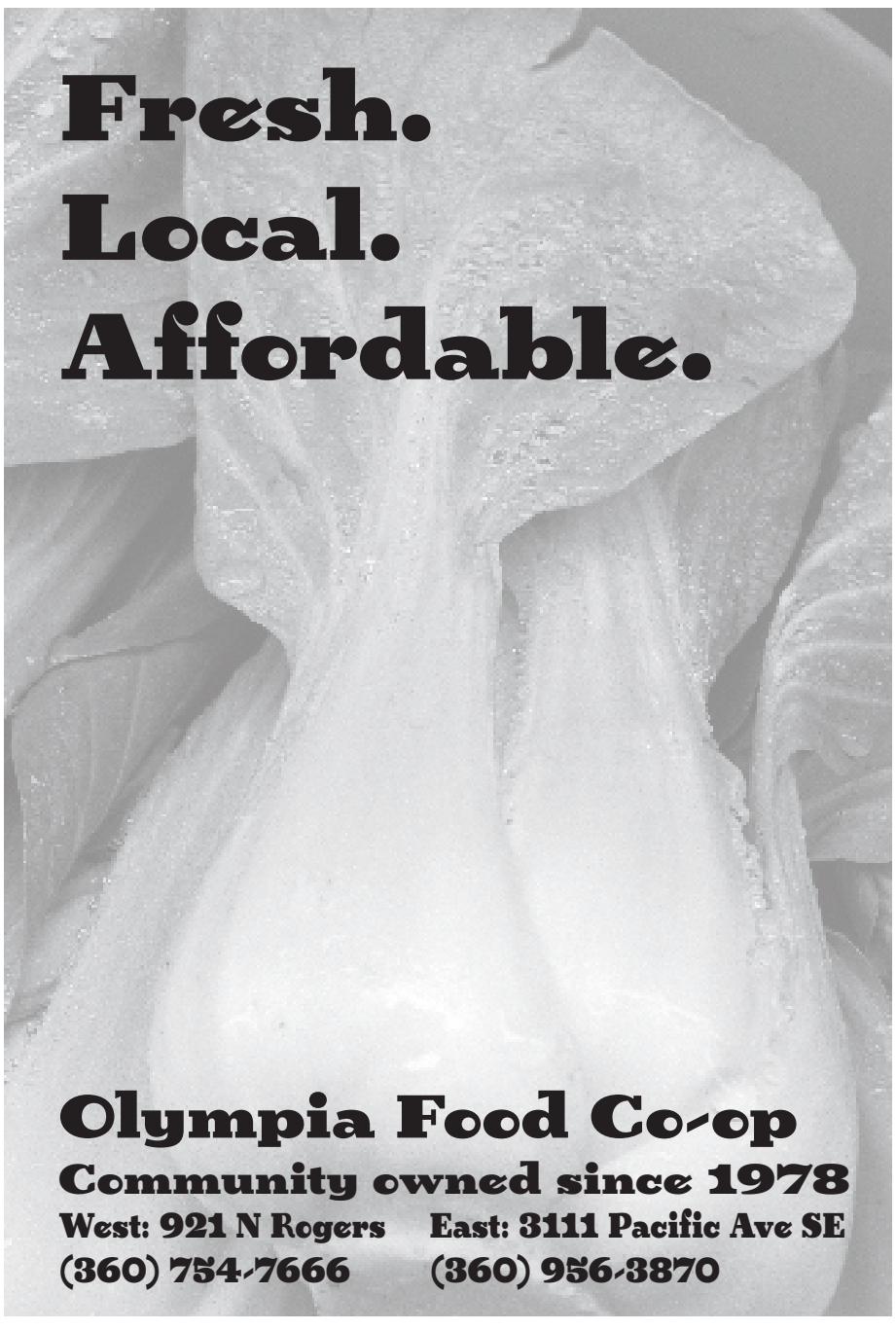
In the White Building on 4th Avenue (across from the Reef and above Last Word Books) in Room 212. The entrance is to the right of Last Word Books. Our office is up the stairs, down the hall, and to the right.

They are currently accepting applications for internships. Areas of focus include:

- Fundraising
- Donations and advertising
- Medicine
- Receptionist

Their wish list:

- Medicine-making supplies
- Clean, empty tincture bottles
- Organically cultivated or ethically wild-crafted herbs
- Books on herbal medicine, anatomy&physiology, herb/drug interactions, etc.



Haiti: The Aftershock Doctrine

from SchNEWS.org.uk

As Haiti's total estimated dead hovers at around 200,000, the earthquake has hit the country so hard that it's dropped a whole digit off its former population of 10 million. It's almost a law of world injustice that the poorer the country, the more vague the body count.

Haiti is a unique place. The only nation to be founded by a slave rebellion, its angry population of African slaves managed to defeat the French back in 1791. Renamed as Haiti - the original Arawak name for the island - it was the Cuba of its day- an inspiration to enslaved peoples the world over and a thorn in the side of imperial regimes.

Unfortunately for Haitians, the western powers have long memories.

Unable to reconquer Haiti militarily, the people of Haiti have been subjected to blockades and one sided trade agreements ever since. The prize for most outrageous treaty probably goes to the 19th century French government, which demanded that Haitians pay France reparations for lost earnings following the loss of 'their' slaves.

As French neo-colonialism was replaced by the U.S. variety, years of massive loans on impossible interest rates have meant that any money from Haiti's cash crops have gone directly to international banks, after corrupt leaders took their cut.

The infamous hereditary dictatorship of 'Papa' Doc and 'Baby' Doc Duvalier ruled the country with a unique form of voodoo oppression between 1957 and 1986. The three decades of Duvalier rule saw Haiti change from being able to feed its population to becoming a cash crop economy reliant on US food imports.

> Just as it did in Iraq, the US military has been trying to control the flow of information out of Haiti.

One of the many unpleasant sights from the Haitian disaster was former US presidents George W Bush and Bill Clinton standing together, earnestly encouraging people to help Haiti. Haiti's former president, Jean Bertrand Aristide, was deposed by Bush Senior in '91, reinstated on Clinton's orders by US troops (on condition that he sign up to harsh neo-liberal measures), only to be deposed by the Marines in 2004.

All of this provides some sort of context for the relief efforts that are underway. Lack of money and the complete absence of almost any social function of the state meant that when the magnitude 7 quake hit so close to Port au Prince, whole neighborhoods of the slum city disintegrated. The airport, seaport, roads and communication links were all so badly built and their destruction so total that the normal routes for aid and rescue teams were barred.

Whilst everyone else from Medicine San Frontiers to the Icelandic government were busy sending food, medics and drinking water, the US dithered, sending the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson three days later, without emergency relief supplies but with plenty of sidewinder missiles and combat helicopters. Even as the rest of the world pitched in, the US claimed they couldn't deliver aid without making sure Haiti was safe first. In that peculiar form of helping that we've learned to know so well, the US sent in the Marines (again). Some 10,000 troops have been, or are about to be deployed - a readymade army of occupation.

As of [Jan.19], the US military is officially in direct control of Haiti. But then, in reality, Haiti has been effectively under occupation on and off for years now. The troops providing aid should be seen in this light. As the Geneva Convention states: 'The duties of the occupying power include [...] providing the population with food and medical supplies; agreeing to relief schemes [...] maintaining medical facilities and services; (and) ensuring public health and hygiene.'

In an effort to prove that the military presence is somehow necessary, the US media has been hard at work painting a picture (just like New Orleans post Katrina) of criminal gangs, mass lootings and 'human rats' (to quote Time Magazine) that need pacifying in order to be given assistance. Yet the word from agencies on the ground is that apart from the desperate search for food and basic supplies, the population has been relatively quiet.

The militarization of the Haiti aid effort has caused huge problems for international non-governmental organizations. Medicine Sans Frontiers has publicly criticized the USA for slowing down and mismanaging the aid effort. Since Sunday MSF medics and 5 planes carrying 85 tons of drugs and surgical supplies have been turned away from the airport due to the prioritization of military air traffic.

Francoise Saulnier, head of MSF's legal department said, 'We lost three days, and these three days have created a massive problem with infection, with gangrene, with amputations that are needed now, while we could have really spared this to those people.'

Just as it did in Iraq, the US military has been trying to control the flow of information out of Haiti. [On Jan.21]. the military ordered the removal of all international journalists from the Haitian capital's airport, without bothering to supply any explanation.

Assuming that aid workers can prevent starvation and disease from taking many more lives, the aid effort will slowly turn into a reconstruction effort. As much as Haitians no doubt appreciate any help right now, the form of aid will have a major bearing on Haiti's direction over next few decades. The IMF is talking about a Marshall Plan for Haiti. Originally the plan was for a loan of $100 million that included demands for wage cuts and raised prices.

Public pressure from debt relief activists such as Jubilee USA, complete with the Facebook campaign 'No shock doctrine for Haiti' managed to curtail some of the most obviously exploitative aspects of the IMF's proposal. Anti-capitalista Naomi Klein called this victory 'unprecedented in my experience and shows that public pressure in moments of disaster can seriously subvert shock doctrine tactics.'

As witnessed during Katrina and the '04 tsunami, the public response looks set to overwhelm the response of governments and international institutions. In Britain alone, the public has already donated #31 million via the Disasters Emergency Committee. The DEC is part run by the government, and, although they may be good at distributing aid, don't expect much in the way of criticism over the handling of Haiti's ongoing disaster.

For anarchists/activists who do want to donate to the aid effort without compromising their anti-state credentials, Medicine Sans Frontiers (http://www.msf.org.uk) and Medicine Du Monden (http://www.mdmuk.org.uk) have a consistent track record of doing (and saying) the right thing.

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News briefs

compiled by Sylvia Smith

Anti-Muslim bias in US

Jan. 25 - Gallup Center for Muslim Studies released a study that claims almost half of Americans "harbor prejudice against Muslims and negative feelings about Islam" more than twice that of "feelings toward Buddhists, Christians, and Jews".

Dalia Mogahed, director of the study, stated, "It was interesting to note that Americans admit no more prejudice against Buddhists and Jews than they do against Christians. So this isn't just simply a problem against minority religions. There is a somewhat unique issue with Muslims in particular."

The study showed that "exposure to those who are Muslim" does not resolve bigotry against Islam. Mogahed stated that if "you know a Muslim but have a negative opinion of the faith as a whole because of media exposure, you can perhaps explain that this one friend of yours is an exception."

The study also revealed that "people who are extremely prejudiced against Jews are very likely to hold the same views of Muslims", and that "Americans are quite ignorant of non-Christian faiths. While 63 percent had very little or no knowledge of Islam, 72 percent said they had very little or no knowledge of Buddhism and half of Americans said they had very little or no knowledge of Judaism."

Source: Religion News Service

Venezuela cancels Haiti's debt

Jan. 25 - The President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez announced that the Venezuelan government will forgive any Venezuelan debts held by Haiti.

During a meeting of the Political Council of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the Venezuelan president said that in view of the tragedy suffered by the Caribbean nation, its debt will not only be forgiven, but the Venezuelan oil supply to the country will continue.

Source: Venezuela Embassy press release

Big banks on top again

It was all a lot of white-washing hooey.

The banks have easily figured out how to get around the Obama administration's new regulations that are supposed to prevent a bank from "owning, investing in or sponsoring a hedge fund, private equity fund or proprietary trading operations unrelated to serving customers for its own profit." All they have to do is make sure a few of their clients are allowed to invest in the same funds or even some of their own employees.

Nothing has changed and likely it was never really meant to.

Source: Business Insider

UN secret detention study

A study, due to be submitted to the UN Human Rights Council this March, claims that US President George Bush "reinvigorated" the use of "secret detention" with his "War on Terror" and that the practice "continues to be used in the name of countering terrorism around the world" in 66 countries.

The study also indicates that there is evidence of secret US-run facilities in "Romania, Thailand, Lithuania, Poland, and Kosovo as well as several in Afghanistan and Iraq" with the probability "that Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Pakistan, Ethiopia and Djibouti" have also been used as "proxy states to hold detainees on the CIA's behalf."

Source: Middle East Online

25 state unemployment funds emptied

The record number of 20 million unemployed in the US last year has depleted unemployment funds in 25 states requiring the states to borrow a combined total of $25 billion. Nine other states are predicted to run out in the next six months.

Washington State's unemployment funds are solvent and not currently at risk.

Source: ProPublica

"Together, we can end this occupation"

A Palestinian organizer speaks

by Jody McIntyre

The Israeli military recently dropped hundreds of leaflets warning Palestinian residents from the village of Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip not to travel within 300 meters of the border – the distance of Israel's so-called "buffer zone." In response, local activists marched to and nonviolently demonstrated inside the "buffer zone" against the illegal action. The Electronic Intifada contributor Jody McIntyre spoke with demonstration organizer Saber Zanin on Jan. 29.

Jody: Can you tell us about yourself?

Saber Zanin: My name is Saber Zanin. I am 31 years old, living in Beit Lahiya, in the northern Gaza Strip. I am a Palestinian who loves life, peace, justice and equal rights for all. I come from a poor family, around 20 of us in all, from Beit Hanoun. In November 2006, our house, the house I lived in my whole life, was completely destroyed by Israeli air strikes, and then by a tank which came to finish the job. We don't know why they chose to target our home, but this is an example of the collective punishment we face living in Gaza.

I had the idea to create a group of volunteers, to work together in the local community, to resist Israel's occupation through nonviolent methods, and to encourage others to do the same. In September 2007, the "Local Initiative" was formed. Rather than relying on governmental institutions or foreign agencies, we work in a personal capacity, and rely on ourselves for everything we need. Altogether the group now consists of around 60 young men and women, from 17-35 years of age, and although we have no political affiliation, we all agree on socialist principles of helping those most in need, and on each individual's freedom to express their own views.

The group works with all sections of society: women, children, people with disabilities and teenagers. In particular, we give priority to the farmers and residents working and living in the so-called "buffer zone." As a group, we visit the residents and offer them aid brought by charities to Gaza (although this is small in amount, and limited in effect) for nothing in return, and we accompany the farmers who continue to work on their land, despite regularly being shot at by the Israeli military for doing so. We also work with the young kids in their area, taking them presents, playing games with them and making parties for them, as well as practicalities such as not going out onto the street in certain areas.

The people living in the "buffer zone" are the foundation of the Local Initiative. If there are any farmers who want help working on their land, we will go to help them. We have also organized protests against Israel's wall in the occupied West Bank and the "buffer zone."

We are always looking for ways to encourage others to join us in our popular resistance against the occupation, and as part of this we try to teach the local community about the human rights they possess: the right to freedom of expression, the right to live freely, the right to an education, to work, to health care, and to a home. We want people to know about their rights so that when they are taken away from them, they will fight for them.

McIntyre: As someone who used to participate in armed resistance against the occupation, what made you adopt nonviolent resistance?

Zanin: Any occupied people have the right to resist, and Palestinians are occupied by the Israelis. It is our fundamental right to resist against this occupation. I used to participate in armed resistance, but armed resistance isn't everything. I am convinced that popular resistance, and protesting against the occupation through nonviolent methods, can actually achieve more than armed resistance, by gaining the sympathy and support for our struggle from people around the world. When we go to protest against Israel's wall in the occupied West Bank, as they do in the villages of Bilin and Nilin, and now here in Beit Hanoun in Gaza as well, we have international activists marching with us, and the whole world is watching. Our demonstrations are nonviolent, so the Israeli army has no excuse to shoot at us and to kill us. I believe that this is one of the noblest ways of protesting against the occupation.

I am convinced that popular resistance, and protesting against the occupation through nonviolent methods, can actually achieve more than armed resistance, by gaining the sympathy and support for our struggle from people around the world.

Last week, the Israeli military dropped hundreds of leaflets near the "buffer zone," instructing residents not to go within 300 meters of the border. We reject this illegal de facto land grab, and in response organized a march to the "buffer zone" on Monday (Jan. 11). The march was under the slogan: "With popular resistance, we challenge the decisions of the Israeli occupiers." We protested against the occupation through nonviolent means. We will now be marching to the "buffer zone" every Monday. We will not be intimidated by the Israeli army's threat, and we will never give up until the occupation is over.

McIntyre: How can people living abroad support your struggle?

Zanin: As we move into the new year, the Local Initiative is in urgent need of funds, in order to continue supporting the families living in the "buffer zone," and to purchase materials in order to document the ongoing crimes of the Israeli occupation forces.

We truly hope that activists from around the world will support us. They could also write in the media against Israel's crimes, organize demonstrations outside the Israeli embassy. Some governments have even expelled the Israeli ambassador! In the UK an arrest warrant was issued for Tzipi Livni for the war crimes she committed against the people of Gaza, and this should serve as an inspiration for others to follow. Together, we can end this occupation.

Jody McIntyre is a journalist from the United Kingdom, currently living in Beit Lahiya in the occupied Gaza Strip.McIntyre has cerebral palsy and travels in a wheelchair. He writes a blog for Ctrl.Alt.Shift, entitled "Life on Wheels," which can be found at www.ctrlaltshift.co.uk. To contact McIntyre, and for more information about the Local Initiative, email jody.mcintyre@gmail.com

Will new leaders revive the AFL-CIO?

by Henry Noble,
Freedom Socialist Party

Last September, in one of his first acts as new AFL-CIO president, Richard Trumka rallied unions on Wall Street to blast the "Apostles of Greed." How refreshing — except that months later, bankers are still getting bonuses as employees get pink slips.

Clearly, U.S. workers need a strong defense against Big Finance — the capitalists who control the highest levels of government. But while Big Labor won gains from Congress in the past, such as social security, nowadays it's the U.S. Chamber of Commerce calling all the shots.

Still, the AFL-CIO is not without muscle. The federation has the capacity to focus the fury of working people, with its 500-plus state and local bodies and 57 member unions representing 8.5 million workers. But its fire is misdirected.

In 2008, leaders enlisted 250,000 members to doorbell and phone bank for politicians. The AFL-CIO and rival Change to Win federation spent $400 million to win the U.S. Congress and presidency for the Democratic Party; they have little to show for it. Imagine that muscle channeled into large strikes and street heat to demand billions of dollars for public jobs instead of bank bailouts. How the AFL-CIO uses its resources is of extreme concern.

Despite new leadership, not much has changed. Upon taking office, Trumka championed the Employee Free Choice Act, which would base union recognition on a simple majority of signed cards. But when President Obama and Congress defanged the bill, and then dumped it, Trumka excused the politicians.

As Congress debates healthcare reform, Trumka is pushing for a public option but not abortion coverage. On both fronts things look grim. To save jobs, he calls for protectionist tariffs on rubber and steel goods, a shortsighted solution that pits U.S. labor against workers of other countries. He should demand the traditional socialist remedy of shortening the workweek with no loss in pay; a 30-hour week would force management to hire 25 percent more workers.

On the plus side, Trumka is determined to replenish AFL-CIO ranks by recruiting young workers. From comprising one-third of U.S. workers in the 1950s, union membership has fallen to 12 percent today. Union treasuries are also smaller.

But he is taking over a troubled organization. The AFL-CIO is besieged by the same anti-union tactics and neoliberal policies that have enabled multinational corporations to ravage much of Latin America.

These external pressures are one challenge. Another challenge is the political weaknesses of the AFL-CIO's own top leadership: officials' historic collusion with management, orientation to the most privileged workers, resistance to correction from the ranks through lack of democracy, inattention to women and people of color, and refusal to aggressively unionize the low paid and unorganized. All this has cost the working class dearly.

In 2005, several unions, including Service Employees International Union and Teamsters quit the federation to form Change to Win. CTW charged that the AFL-CIO had squandered resources lobbying politicians rather than organizing workers. But in 2008, CTW also bet the farm that a Democratic administration would bring beneficial laws and new union members.

In contrast to the compromising playbook at AFL-CIO headquarters, dynamism is apparent among the ranks who are fighting for survival.

Now is the time to form radical rank-and-file caucuses that can push unions and the broader labor movement to embrace and act on this orientation: an injury to one is an injury to all.

Workers can't wait for change from AFL-CIO officials, but can press for it while organizing in self-defense. Onward to radical change throughout society — flowing from the ranks of the working class!

Henry Noble is the former National Secretary of the Freedom Socialist Party, and a retired member of the Int'l Association of Machinists. He can be reached at bjnoble@igc.org.

The full version of this article can be read at the Freedom Socialist Party website, www.socialism.com.

▸ **CITY COUNCIL,** continued from page 1

tion. "You three fought for the right to sit here," lectured Strub, looking at Councilmembers Roe and Buxbaum, 'but I won't give it up...I don't want to give it to them.'"

Rogers said she appreciated Strub's concern but explained that, "In 1972, the state created a shoreline master plan for a reason. Shorelines are special. They belong to the whole state. They didn't quite trust local governments to (safeguard them). You don't give away the crown jewels. Let's be clear - this is a shoreline of statewide significance."

Councilmember Ottavelli agreed with Strub that he could not support the motion. Mayor Mah said he had concerns with the Senate bill's creation of a special height district, and which restricts heights to a maximum of 35 feet.

After a lengthy discussion, Councilmember Strub attempted to wrap it up, and explained to the new councilmembers that they could vote against their own motion, which brought general laughter, but then, she seemed to personally threaten the newcomers by slowly saying, "So I'm going to look at you one last time: don't--push--too--far. I've welcomed you with open arms. There's time for this later...."

Unfazed, Councilmember Buxbaum said, "It may be appropriate to point out that (the Senate's) companion bill does not have the height district language. And I hope as we develop as a council, none of these actions will be construed as personal. We're all working toward the common good...and we may agree to disagree."

The vote passed 4 - 3 with Councilmembers Strub, Ottavelli and Mah voting no.

Waterfront activists and community members, gathered outside council chambers in the hallway after the meeting, expressed relief and excitement that their voices were finally being heard by the newly elected council.

"It's democracy at its best isn't it? This should give everyone hope that the impossible is possible," said Bonnie Jacobs of Friends of the Waterfront, after the meeting, which adjourned at about 9:20 p.m.

This article is a reprint from the very informative website of Janine Gates, janineslittlehollywood.blogspot.com.

▸ **DESIGN BOARD,** continued from page 1

tend to think this (area) was rezoned for this specific proposal, for this specific developer, for this specific project," said Carver. Board member Duane Edwards said, "It's hard to deny it's an attractive building...but what we're arguing about is location. If this wasn't the location, we wouldn't be sitting here arguing about it."

Deputy city attorney Darren Nienaber repeatedly tried to steer the board into being more specific in their reasons for the denial, to no avail. "If there are additional reasons to deny it, then the hearing examiner should know that...." Nienaber urged.

During a meeting recess, Design Review Board members Duane Edwards, left, Katie Cox, standing, Thomas Muller, in striped shirt, and Spencer Daniels, right, appear more relaxed after their decision. Photo by Janine Gates.

Nienaber said that in the case of the 18th Avenue Estates case, the hearing examiner sent back the land use approval decision for more information.

Showing firm leadership, Board chair Thomas Carver reiterated to Nienaber, "Even though I don't agree with the previous motion, I think our process is solid. If the hearing examiner wants more information, we'll give it to him."

Again Nienaber stated his case to provide more explanation for the plan denial.

"I think everyone has made themselves clear...and we've gone farther than we usually do. I'm starting to feel like we're doing the hearing examiner's job now...." said Carver.

Neinaber finally backed off. "I've said the same thing three times now and it won't help to say it a fourth. I'm not here to advocate one way or the other, I'm just making sure the hearing examiner will have all his facts," Neinaber said, to chuckles from the audience.

"These are just recommendations - I think we've done our job," said Carver.

The recommendations now go to the city's hearing examiner for review. That should happen in the next couple months. Cari Hornbein, city senior planner, said a date has not been scheduled. Nienaber said it could be a multi-day hearing, due to the complexity of the issue.

For more information about the project, contact Cari Hornbein, Senior Planner at (360) 753-8048 or chornbein@ci.olympia.wa.us.

This article is also a reprint from the very informative website of Janine Gates, janineslittlehollywood.blogspot.com

Highest Tide in Olympia Marks Sea-Level Rise Concerns and Local Action

Several dozen South Sounders braved the cold wind and rain to gather downtown on Percival Landing this morning to observe the highest tide of the year. Photo by Janet Blanding.

by Janine Gates

According to the latest climate change information, melting ice caps and warming oceans could add up to five feet to current sea levels by the end of the century. For Olympia, that means most of downtown will be underwater when coupled with a normal high tide, according to the City of Olympia's projected sea level rise studies.

On Monday morning, Jan. 4, several dozen South Sounders braved the cold wind and rain to gather downtown on Percival Landing to observe the highest tide of the year, which was expected to be 17 plus feet.

Several speakers and a lively band, the Artesian Rumble Arkestra ("ARK") entertained the crowd through pelting rain between 8 and 9 a.m. The highest tide level occurred at 8:37 a.m., and a moment of silence was requested of the crowd to reflect upon the implications climate change will have on our children and grandchildren, and the need for global and local action.

"The ocean is like a giant cruise ship - it has tremendous inertia and because of this, we've already locked in not only decades of future sea level rise, but centuries worth... By the end of this century we predict that sea levels in the Puget Sound could increase by over four feet...," Spencer Reeder, lead policy strategist on climate change for the Washington State Department of Ecology told the crowd.

Reeder said that Ecology has just launched a new observation and research program with federal partners at the U.S. Geological Survey. For more information about this program, go to www.ecy.wa.gov and follow the "Facing Climate Change" links.

Monica Hoover, a concerned Thurston County citizen, said she was glad to see such a good turnout for the event. "It shows how much we care about our shoreline and our environment," said Hoover.

Hoover is particularly concerned about the Port of Olympia's development of the NorthPoint area, and circulated a petition asking port commissioners to halt all NorthPoint redevelopment projects, "pending a full and open public process of engagement and dialogue." The petition also asks that the commissioners suspend its exclusive development agreement with MJR Development to potentially develop the NorthPoint area with a hotel and restaurant.

MJR Development staff admitted at an October open house that they had not seen Olympia sea-level rise maps or data. According to city studies, the NorthPoint area would be underwater in the event of sea-level rise. Hoover planned to present the signed petitions to the Port Commissioners at their meeting on Jan. 11. The usual location for Port of Olympia commission meetings is the LOTT Board Room at 111 Market St. NE. (Check the website prior to the meeting: portolympia.com/commission/schedule.)

Linton Wildrick, a Tumwater hydrogeologist, also turned out to see the high tide. Wildrick said he spent thousands of hours as a member of the now-defunct group, Friends of the Artesians, to find a replacement well for the one in the Diamond parking lot near Fourth Avenue, and worked to get a permit for a new well on the port property.

"The tide is pretty interesting....We're in a unique location. The weight of the glaciers from 13,000 years ago depressed the earth's crust, maybe by tens of feet, and the land, since the glaciers melted, has been rebounding ever since. It's very, very slow but it's just enough to help...but the margin is very, very thin," said Wildrick.

Andy Haub, City of Olympia Public Works planning and engineering manager, is taking the lead on sea-level rise issues for the city and attended the high tide observance. Asked about Wildrick's assessment that the land is "rebounding," Haub said, "I don't disagree with him, but some people may say that the elevation in Olympia is sinking. About 25% of expected sea level rise in the next 100 years could be attributed to geologic subsidence, but now that's being questioned...it will take about 20 years to figure it out...."

Haub gave an overview of recently completed land elevation-related work on the potential impacts of sea level rise on downtown Olympia at an event on Jan. 11, at the Olympia Center, co-sponsored by Olympia Climate Action. For more information about Olympia Climate Action events, contact Barb Scavezze at 878-9901 or barb@scavezze.com. Haub had also recently given a similar report to the Olympia City Council. City of Olympia Sea-Level Rise and Climate Change information is available at: ci.olympia.wa.us/community/sustainability/climate-change.aspx

Haub later said that by 9:30 a.m., the tide had lost a half foot or so.

"We keep looking for all these dramatic signs but it's going to be incremental... we're better without the drama (sudden, catastrophic events) but that's what gets people's attention," said high tide observer Scott Morgan.

This article is yet another reprint from the very informative website of Janine Gates, janineslittlehollywood.blogspot.com

Arrest Blair for war crimes

from SchNEWS

You probably wouldn't need much encouragement to try to perform a citizen's arrest on Britain's greatest living War Criminal, Tony Blair. But, just in case you are the kind of money-grabbing mercenary who does, someone has had the genius idea of offering hard cash to anyone who can collar the mad vicar.

They have set up a website called www.arrestblair.org and invited donations to offer up as bounty to anybody who can stand hand to shoulder with the Great One and invite him to accompany them to the nearest police station to await trial for his crimes against humanity.

A popular idea or have people 'moved on' as Blair prepares for his smarm offensive in front of the Chilcot Whitewash?

Within two days they had over #9000 quid in the kitty. Not quite the billions spent on murdering up to a million in Iraq, but not to be sniffed at (SchNEWS is already hard at work cooking up a masterplan to bag the cash).

One quarter of whatever is in the pot is available to everybody who manages it - like a lucrative reality gameshow (when to strike?! Let that pot build up, but don't wait too long!) - with the added bonus of leaving 'man of the people' Blair feeling hounded in his homeland and in the news for all the wrong reasons.

For a full briefing on your mission, should you choose to accept it, go to www.arrestblair.org.

This article will self destruct in 5,4,3...

Howard Zinn

The following are a collection of personal reflections from those whose lives were touched by Howard Zinn's inspirational work, along with excerpts from his writings and interviews with the great author, historian, and storyteller.

Journalist Amy Goodman

Howard Zinn, legendary historian, author and activist, died last week at the age of 87. His most famous book is *A People's History of the United States*. Zinn told me last May, "The idea of 'A People's History' is to go beyond what people have learned in school ... history through the eyes of the presidents and the generals in the battles fought in the Civil War, [to] the voices of ordinary people, of rebels, of dissidents, of women, of black people, of Asian-Americans, of immigrants, of socialists and anarchists and troublemakers of all kinds."

A People's History of the United States

From Chapter 1, "Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress."

"One can lie outright about the past. Or one can omit facts which might lead to unacceptable conclusions. Morison does neither. He refuses to lie about Columbus. He does not omit the story of mass murder; indeed he describes it with the harshest word one can use: genocide.

"But he does something else - he mentions the truth quickly and goes on to other things more important to him. Outright lying or quiet omission takes the risk of discovery which, when made, might arouse the reader to rebel against the writer. To state the facts, however, and then to bury them in a mass of other information is to say to the reader with a certain infectious calm: yes, mass murder took place, but it's not that important - it should weigh very little in our final judgments; it should affect very little what we do in the world.

"It is not that the historian can avoid emphasis of some facts and not others. This is as natural to him as to the mapmaker, who, in order to produce a usable drawing for practical purposes, must first flatten and distort the shape of the earth, then choose out of the bewildering mass of geographic information those things needed for the purpose of this or that particular map.

"My argument cannot be against selection, simplification, emphasis, which are inevitable for both cartographers and historians. But the mapmaker's distortion is a technical necessity for a common purpose shared by all people who need maps. The historian's distortion is more than technical, it is ideological; it is released into a world of contending interests, where any chosen emphasis supports (whether the historian means to or not) some kind of interest, whether economic or political or racial or national or sexual.

"Furthermore, this ideological interest is not openly expressed in the way a mapmaker's technical interest is obvious ("This is a Mercator projection for long-range navigation - for short-range, you'd better use a different projection"). No, it is presented as if all readers of history had a common interest which historians serve to the best of their ability. This is not intentional deception; the historian has been trained in a society in which education and knowledge are put forward as technical problems of excellence and not as tools for contending social classes, races, nations.

"To emphasize the heroism of Columbus and his successors as navigators and discoverers, and to deemphasize their genocide, is not a technical necessity but an ideological choice. It serves - unwittingly - to justify what was done.

"My point is not that we must, in telling history, accuse, judge, condemn Columbus *in absentia*. It is too late for that; it would be a useless scholarly exercise in morality. But the easy acceptance of atrocities as a deplorable but necessary price to pay for progress (Hiroshima and Vietnam, to save Western civilization; Kronstadt and Hungary, to save socialism; nuclear proliferation, to save us all) - that is still with us. One reason these atrocities are still with us is that we have learned to bury them in a mass of other facts, as radioactive wastes are buried in containers in the earth. We have learned to give them exactly the same proportion of attention that teachers and writers often give them in the most respectable of classrooms and textbooks. This learned sense of moral proportion, coming from the apparent objectivity of the scholar, is accepted more easily than when it comes from politicians at press conferences. It is therefore more deadly."

Evergreen State professor Peter Bohmer

Howard Zinn contributed in so many important ways to creating an understanding of U.S. history that put at the center the struggles of oppressed people for dignity, and for economic and social justice. His classic, *A People's History of the United States*, has had a profound effect in this regard.

In his brilliant first chapter, which has changed millions of people's understanding of the colonization of what is today the United States, and the colonialists' mass murder of indigenous people, Zinn wrote: "To emphasize the heroism of Columbus and his successors as navigators and discoverers, and to deemphasize their genocide, is not a technical necessity but an ideological choice. It serves—unwittingly—to justify what was done. ... Even allowing for the imperfection of myths, it is enough to make us question for that time and ours, the excuse of progress in the annihilation of races, and the telling of history from the standpoint of the conquerors and leaders of Western civilization".

It is my favorite book. I have given away about 25 copies as gifts over the last 25 years and used it in countless classes.

Howard was a very wise and humane person who relentlessly criticized our unjust capitalist system. He believed in giving us historical examples of individuals and movements who in ways big and small worked and struggled against all injustice and for a just society. In language and analysis that was simple but not simplistic, radical but accessible, Howard Zinn's anti-racism and anti-imperialism and his strong identification with working people stood out. So did his strong anti-war commitment and perspective. He listened to and respected the non-elites, those usually omitted in the official histories.

While motivated in his writing by his value of the dignity of all people and their right to self-determination, and by his belief in the centrality of ending poverty and all forms of oppression such as sexism and racism, and for peace and justice, Howard told the truth and did not exaggerate and omit facts that were uncomfortable to his beliefs. He also acted on them by participating in countless demonstrations and other forms of activism from the 1930's until the present.

Despite the obscene inequality and militarism that marks the United States today, Howard Zinn continued to have hope and believed that we, the people, of the United States, could and would transform this society into some form of democratic socialism that lived in harmony with the rest of the world.

Author Dave Zirin

Only Howard could pull that off because he was entirely authentic. When he spoke against poverty it was from the perspective of someone who had to work in the shipyards during the Great Depression. When he spoke against war, it was from the perspective of someone who flew as a bombardier during World War II, and was forever changed by the experience. When he spoke against racism it was from the perspective of someone who taught at Spelman College during the civil rights movement and was arrested sitting in with his students.

Former Zinn student William Holtzman recalls a Zinn anecdote about gaining tenure

At that point, Howard knew his goose was cooked, so, in his words, he decided to go all out. "I was in great form that day. I denounced the war, I denounced the secretary of state, the president. ... I even denounced the founders."

The creme de la creme of polite Boston society, the BU trustees, turned up in black tie to discover one of their own at a microphone loudly denouncing anything and everything.

Howard went back to campus and began to think about his next teaching assignment - in another state or another country.

A few days later, a certified letter arrived from the Board of Trustees. It read something like: "Dear Dr. Zinn: Congratulations, the board has extended tenure" - on the morning of the annual Founders Day event.

To me, this was vintage Howard Zinn: honest, courageous and right on target.

Author William Loren Katz

Howard Zinn broadened the battle when he claimed conventional U.S. texts and school courses failed by celebrating wars, legislation, Presidents, generals and captains of industry. He stood history back on its feet when he told on how masses of American women and men, people of color and poor whites built the country first as slaves and indentured servants, and then as mill hands, assembly line workers and maids. He further antagonized traditional scholars by rejoicing in the disobedience of slave rebels, union organizers and radical civil rights and anti-war agitators. He found dissidents to be America's real patriots and democrats -- not the George Washingtons, Thomas Jeffersons and Andrew Jacksons who talked of liberty while they traded in slaves, and sent posses after those who escaped.

A People's History of the United States

From Chapter 2, "Drawing the Color Line."

"The system was psychological and physical at the same time. The slaves were taught discipline, were impressed again and again with the idea of their own inferiority to 'know their place,' to see blackness as a sign of subordination, to be awed by the power of the master, to merge their interest with the master's, destroying their own individual needs. To accomplish this there was the discipline of hard labor, the breakup of the slave family, the lulling effects of religion (which sometimes led to "great mischief," as one slaveholder reported), the creation of disunity among slaves by separating them into field slaves and more privileged house slaves, and finally the power of law and the immediate power of the overseer to invoke whipping, burning, mutilation, and death. Dismemberment was provided for in the Virginia Code of 1705. Maryland passed a law in 1723 providing for cutting off the ears of blacks who struck whites, and that for certain serious crimes, slaves should be hanged and the body quartered and exposed."

A People's History of the United States

From Chapter 22, "The Unreported Resistance."

"At the University of Georgia, 70 students opposed to the [1991 Persian Gulf] war held an all-night vigil, and in the Georgia Legislature, Representative Cynthia McKinney made a speech attacking the bombing of Iraq, leading many of the other legislators to walk off the floor. She held her ground, and it seemed that there had been at least some change in thinking since Representative Julian Bond was expelled from the very same legislature for criticizing the war in Vietnam during the 1960s. At a junior high school in Newton, Massachusetts, 350 students marched to city hall to present a petition to the mayor declaring their opposition to the war in the Gulf. Clearly, many were trying to reconcile their feelings about war with their sympathy for soldiers sent to the Middle East. A student leader, Carly Baker, said: 'We don't think bloodshed is the right way. We are supporting the troops and are proud of them, but we don't want war.'"

Author and professor Noam Chomsky

[T]he phrase of his that always rings in my mind is his reverence for and his detailed study of what he called "the countless small actions of unknown people" that lead to those great moments that enter the historical record, a record that you simply can't begin to understand unless you look at those countless small actions.

And he not only wrote about them eloquently, but he participated in them. And he inspired others to participate in them. And the antiwar movement was one case, the civil rights movement before it, the Central American wars in the 1980s. In fact, just about any—you know, office worker strikes—just about any significant action for peace and justice, Howard was there. People saw him as a leader, but he was really a participant. His remarkable character made him a leader, even if he was just sitting, waiting for the police to pull people away like everyone else.

A People's History of the United States

From Chapter 14, "War is the Health of the State."

"The government quickly succeeded in creating such a consensus [for entering World War I], according to the traditional histories. Woodrow Wilson's biographer Arthur Link wrote: 'In the final analysis American policy was determined by the President and public opinion.' In fact, there is no way of measuring public opinion at that time, and there is no persuasive evidence that the public wanted war. The government had to work hard to create its consensus. That there was no spontane-

"Even allowing for the imperfection of myths, it is enough to make us question, for that time and ours, the excuse of progress in

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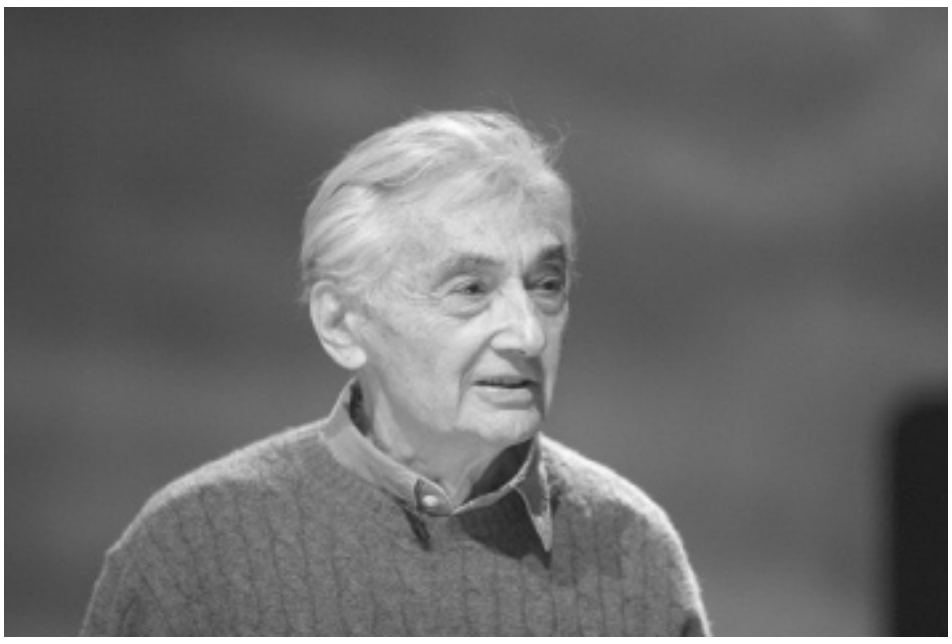

Zinn, on stage at *The People Speak*. Photo taken from Utne Reader. Photo by Greg Federman.

ous urge to fight is suggested by the strong measures taken: a draft of young men, an elaborate propaganda campaign throughout the country, and harsh punishment for those who refused to get in line.

"Despite the rousing words of Wilson about a war 'to end all wars' and 'to make the world safe for democracy,' Americans did not rush to enlist. A million men were needed, but in the first six weeks after the declaration of war only 73,000 volunteered. Congress voted overwhelmingly for a draft."

A People's History of the United States
From Chapter 19, "Surprises."

"The right to an abortion became a major issue. Before 1970, about a million abortions were done every year, of which only about ten thousand were legal. Perhaps a third of the women having illegal abortions - mostly poor people - had to be hospitalized for complications. How many thousands died as a result of these illegal abortions no one really knows. But the illegalization of abortion clearly worked against the poor, for the rich could manage either to have their baby or to have their abortion under safe conditions.

"Perhaps the most profound effect of the women's movement of the sixties -- beyond the actual victories on abortion, in job equality -- was called 'consciousness raising,' often done in 'women's groups,' which met in homes all across the country. This meant the rethinking of roles, the rejection of inferiority, the confidence in self, a bond of sisterhood, a new solidarity of mother and daughter."

A People's History of the United States
From Chapter 10, "The Other Civil War."

"At the Baltimore & Ohio station in Martinsburg, West Virginia, workers determined to fight the wage cut went on strike, uncoupled the engines, ran them into the roundhouse, and announced no more trains would leave Martinsburg until the 10 percent cut was canceled.

"Six hundred freight trains now jammed the yards at Martinsburg. The West Virginia governor applied to newly elected President Rutherford Hayes for federal troops, saying the state militia was insufficient. In fact, the militia was not totally reliable, being composed of many railroad workers. Much of the U.S. army was tied up in Indian battles in the West. Congress had not appropriated money for the army yet, but J.P. Morgan, August Belmont, and other bankers now offered to lend money to pay army officers (but no enlisted men). Federal troops arrived in Martinsburg, and the freight cars began to move."

A People's History of the United States
From Chapter 19, "Surprises."

"The prison had arisen in the United States as an attempt at Quaker reform, to replace mutilation, hanging, exile -- the traditional punishments during colonial times. The prison was intended, through isolation, to produce repentence and salvation, but prisoners went insane and died in that isolation. By mid-nineteenth century, the prison was based on hard labor, along with various punishments: sweat boxes, iron yokes, solitary. The approach was summed up by the warden at the Ossining, New York, penitentiary: 'In order to reform a criminal you must first break his spirit.' That approach persisted."

Zinn quote posted outside the volunteer collective Left Bank Books in Seattle.

"Law does not bring order, certainly not the harmonious order of a cooperative society. It brings the order of the totalitarian state, or the prison, or the army, where fear [and] threat keep people in their assigned places."

Author Daniel Ellsberg paraphrases a speech he heard Zinn give in 1971

At the end of his comments he said, "I want to speak now to some of the members of this audience, the plainclothes policemen among us, the military intelligence agents who are assigned to do surveillance. You are taking the part of secret police, spying on your fellow Americans. You should not be doing what you are doing. You should rethink it, and stop. You do not have to carry out orders that go against the grain of what it means to be an American."

A Democracy Now! Interview between Amy Goodman and Howard Zinn

Amy Goodman: Howard Zinn was a frequent guest on Democracy Now! He last joined us at our old firehouse studio in May. At that time, I asked him for his assessment of President Obama.

Howard Zinn: "I wish President Obama would listen carefully to Martin Luther King. I'm sure he pays verbal homage, as everyone does, to Martin Luther King, but he ought to think before he sends missiles over Pakistan, before he agrees to this bloated military budget, before he sends troops to Afghanistan, before he opposes the single-payer system, which you talked about earlier in your program. He ought to ask, 'What would Martin Luther King do? And what would Martin Luther King say?' And if he only listened to King, he would be a very different president than he's turning out to be so far. I think we ought to hold Obama to his promise to be different and bold and to make change. So far, he hasn't come through on that promise."

Zinn, in his final column titled "The Nobel's Feeble Gesture"

"I think some progressives have forgotten the history of the Democratic Party, to which people have turned again and again in desperate search for saviors, later to be disappointed. Our political history shows us that only great popular movements, carrying out bold actions that awakened the nation and threatened the Establishment, as in the Thirties and the Sixties, have been able to shake that pyramid of corporate and military power and at least temporarily changed course."

A People's History of the United States
From the Afterword.

"What we learn about the past does not give us absolute truth about the present, but it may cause us to look deeper than the glib statements made by political leaders and the 'experts' quoted in the press.

"Class interest has always been obscured behind an all-encompassing veil called 'the national interest.' My own war experience, and the history of all those military interventions in which the United States engaged, made me skeptical when I heard people in high political office invoke 'the national interest' or 'national security' to justify their policies. It was with such justifications that Truman initiated a 'police action' in Korea that killed several million people, that Johnson and Nixon carried out a war in Indochina in which perhaps 3 million people died, that Reagan invaded Grenada, Bush attacked Panama and then Iraq, and Clinton bombed Iraq again and again."

Journalist Al Giordano

Last night and today the Internets were ablaze with worthy praise for this great narrator of authentic history, the history from below. But I must say I am puzzled (although not surprised) by how many folks who don't practice what Zinn preached have joined in the hagiography-fest because they either really believe they are part of his tradition or merely to co-brand themselves with his now hallowed name.

Howard, at least in the decades I knew him (and I don't claim to have been any particularly close friend - just another among thousands of comrades who knew him from where the work was being done, inside the foxholes of community organizing) never once whined, never committed an act of poutrage, not feigned, not real. He didn't view the world and its discontents as too overwhelming to change and he understood the non-linear nature of change. He was pragmatic to the core, optimistic in word and deed.

Zinn, in a March 2003 essay titled "The Chorus Against War"

"The process of undermining the legitimacy of our own government has begun. There has been a worm eating at the innards of its complacency all along- the knowledge of the American public, buried, but in a very shallow grave, easy to disinter, that this government came to power by a political coup, not by popular will.

"The movement should not let this be forgotten.

"The first steps to delegitimize this government are being taken, in small but significant ways.

"The wife of the President calls off a gathering of poets in the White House because the poets have rebelled, seeing the march to war as a violation of the most sacred values of poets through the ages.

"The generals who led the Gulf War of 1991 speak out against this impending war as foolish, unnecessary, dangerous.

"The CIA contradicts the President by saying Saddam Hussein is not likely to use his weapons unless he is attacked."

From a 2006 interview with Matthew Rothschild, editor of The Progressive magazine

Matthew: You are kind of the apostle of optimism on the left, and there are so many people who are the apostles of doom, who seem to take comfort in our powerlessness and see every dark cloud out there in the sky. To what do you attribute this optimism?

Zinn: "Poor eyesight."

Zinn: "No, I don't think I'm *foolishly* optimistic - Well, who would confess to being *foolishly* optimistic? - By that I mean, my optimism is not based on 'Oh, everything is going to be great tomorrow, or next week, or next month.' It's a long-term optimism. I recognize that in the short-term, we may go through tougher, worse times than we are going through now, but it's a long-term optimism based on history, based on the fact that I know that people through history and in other places and here in this country have gone through terrible things that have lasted for decades and decades. Look how long slavery lasted, and look how long it took for an anti-slavery movement to develop. But my optimism is based on something I said before, that I think that people are basically decent, they have common sense. They can be deceived for a while, but when they begin to learn, when the truth begins to make its way through the apertures of disinformation and lies, people do wake up and change, and we've seen this historically. So my optimism is grounded on history, it's grounded on my belief in the fundamental decency of human beings all over the world. It's a *rational* optimism, I insist."

From a 2009 interview with journalist Wajahat Ali

Ali: You're now a man in his golden years, and you look back at your many accomplishments. You've done amazing things. Any regrets? And also, if you could choose something that would embody your legacy - what would it be?

Zinn: "I have no regrets about my political activity, only that I sometimes got carried away with it and didn't find the right balance between obligations to my family and my need to be involved in social movements. As for a work of mine that embodies my "legacy," probably it is not one book, but rather the combination of being a writer and an activist, being a public intellectual, by using my scholarship for social change."

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the annihilation of races, and the telling of history from the standpoint of the conquerors and leaders of Western Civilization."

Obama's Latin American Policy: Little Change and Betrayed Hope

by Joshua Neuhouser

Above and below right: Hondurans take to the streets in Tegucigalpa to demand democracy. Photos by Bruce Wilkinson.

In the past 20 years, few areas of the world have showed signs of hope for the future of humanity. Everywhere you look, from France and Switzerland (that each began openly legislating discrimination against Muslims) to China and Vietnam (where economic growth comes at the expense of totalitarianism) to Africa and the Middle East (where religious and ethnic chauvinism has been the rule of the day), there are good reasons to feel pessimistic and cynical. Latin America has been the one exception.

The region was subjected to some of the worst atrocities of the Cold War, but since the transition to democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Latin America has moved sharply to the left. Social movements from Mexico to Argentina have challenged both the capitalist world order as well as the orthodox thinking of leftist politics, while heads of state such as Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, Bolivia's Evo Morales, and Brazil's Lula da Silva have taken the opportunity provided by the decline of United States power to construct new regional development models that would end Latin America's crippling dependence on the North.

There are a great deal of political differences that divide the far left represented by the Zapatistas from the center-left represented by Lula, but what unites them all is that they have managed to take advantage of the decline of US power to carry out political experiments that would have been unthinkable decades ago. Zapatista spokesman Subcomandante Marcos has not been hunted down by the U.S. Marines the way that Nicaraguan guerrilla leader Augusto Sandino was, nor has Evo Morales been overthrown in a CIA-backed coup like Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala or Salvador Allende of Chile. Distracted by their invasions of various Middle Eastern countries, the Bush administration had little time for Latin America.

In 2002, a U.S.-funded coup d'etat in Venezuela was badly botched. Hugo Chavez was able to successfully mobilize his supporters and not only retake the presidency after 24 hours but even emerge from the crisis in a stronger political position than ever. Bush continued to demonize Chavez, but quickly moved on. With Saddam Hussein still at large, there were bigger fish to fry. A similar attempt by right-wing Bolivians to spark a civil war in late 2008 fizzled into a minor diplomatic incident. And early last year, incoming President Barack Obama raised hopes that Bush's slapdash attempts at regime change in South America represented the end of an era when he referred to "a new chapter of engagement...based on mutual respect and common interest" that his administration would spearhead among the nations of the hemisphere. Yet during the same speech he spoke of his close collaboration with Mexican President Felipe Calderon, who came to power in a blatantly stolen election three years previously and who has since overseen the intervention of the military into nearly every aspect of Mexican life, which hinted that common interest may prove to be in the eye of the beholder after all.

I missed the excitement that gripped our country on Election Night. I didn't take part in (or grumble about) any of the spontaneous celebrations in the streets – I was in Mexico at the time, where I had the chance to observe the curious echoes of the excitement that Obama's campaign generated in the Third World. Gustavo Esteva, a member of the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca who domestically argues against the idea that any political party could represent a lesser evil than the current system, told me that October, "in your country, it is very important to vote." Even when I went to rallies, where it was common to see banners that depicted all three of Mexico's major political parties as different serpentine heads of the same monster, people would tentatively ask me about Obama, testing out through the nearest gringo the opinions of the future next President of Northside. Would he really end the war? What did he think of the border wall? Of Cuba? Of Chavez?

The tone was always one of guarded optimism, of a hope that some day the most powerful man on Earth could treat the rest of the world with dignity, and of an unwillingness to be betrayed once again by a powerful and arrogant country that has never maintained respectful relations with its neighbors. Others were less cautious – one laundromat in Oaxaca's Colonia Reforma neighborhood, for example, integrated a portrait of the President-Elect into their logo.

> "The rules of the game have changed, and nobody within the administration could openly support the coup as they would have maybe five or ten years ago. But the support in Washington for that coup government is still very strong."

As it turned out, unfortunately, caution was the proper approach. Jose Luis Baquedano, the Secretary-General of the United Worker's Federation of Honduras, spoke of this when he visited Olympia last month.

"The populist discourse (coming out of the US) was like a siren's call," Baquedano said. "We believed that (Obama) would be different from Bush, from Reagan. But for us he has been the same as the rest... (we have seen) intervention, expansionism, and the use of force."

And it is in Baquedano's country where we can see what has been possibly the worst act of the US government since Bush stepped down, and what may signal the reversal of all that has been gained in Latin America since the end of the Cold War. It is in Honduras, the archetypal Central American banana republic and staunch ally of the US through thick and thin, that democracy was subverted when the military ousted President Mel Zelaya last June and installed in his place the unpopular conservative politician Roberto Micheletti.

Zelaya, originally a centrist politician from a landowning family, moved to the left over the course of his term in office. He began agitating for a 60 percent increase in the minimum wage, aligned Honduras with the regional development plan championed by Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales, and perhaps most controversially, he proposed the creation of a Constituent Assembly that would revise the constitution. The opponents of the Constituent Assembly have tried to portray it as a power-grab on Zelaya's part, pointing to similar constitutional revisions in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador that extended Presidential powers and term limits. However, the Honduran Constituent Assembly would not be convened until after Zelaya's term ended, making a Chavez-style power grab on his part not only unlikely but impossible. (Incidentally, Micheletti had tried to extend Presidential term limits himself back in 1985.)

What was really at stake was the power of the Honduran oligarchy. The constitution of Honduras was written during the country's shaky transition to democracy in the 1980's, when death squads still roamed the land and when the Honduran military was actively working to subvert the democratic Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua.

Written against this background, the constitution minimizes potential political participation by the lower classes and entrenches the privileges of the Honduran elite – who, like the elite in most Latin American countries, enjoy the benefits of some of the greatest income disparities in the world. It was not their fear of political dictatorship that inspired the coup, as the plotters claim, but their fear of the end of their unspoken economic dictatorship that caused them to arrest Zelaya on the day that the Honduran people were to vote on a non-binding referendum on whether or not to change the constitution.

The day of Zelaya's arrest, the Venezuelan journalist Eva Golinger immediately proclaimed it to be "Obama's First Coup d'Etat" in a fit of irresponsibility for which she was rightly criticized by many of her comrades on the left.

It is true that, given the history of relations between the US and Central America, it is entirely reasonable to assume CIA involvement or approval of nearly every right-wing coup south of the Rio Grande, but relations with the United States were shaky during the first months of military rule. When the rest of the Organization of American States lined up to condemn the coup, the US State Department had little

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choice but to follow suit. While Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was reluctant to call a coup a coup, preferring to tepidly refer to "the tragic events," Obama came out strongly in favor of Zelaya. "We are very clear that President Zelaya is the democratically elected President," he told the press, and that "it would be a terrible precedent if we start moving backwards into the era in which we are seeing military coups as a means of political transition rather than democratic elections."

The Honduran oligarchy lashed out against Obama, who they felt was denying them the support they were entitled to, and the de facto foreign minister began referring to Obama as a "sugar plantation worker" and "a little nigger who knows nothing about anything." Even Hugo Chavez, who rarely passes up a chance for getting in some good jabs at the US, managed to find some kind words to describe Obama's response to the Honduran crisis.

This was an historic moment. Not since Santa Anna has a US President condemned a right-wing coup in Latin America.

Yet what was happening behind the scenes in Washington was more complex than a sudden, unexpected bout of morality.

"The rules of the game have changed, and nobody within the administration could openly support the coup as they would have maybe five or ten years ago," said economist Mark Weisbrot. "But the support within the institutions here in Washington for that coup government are still very strong, just as they've been in the past."

And so the State Department made a big show out of cutting $31 million of aid to Honduras, while covering up the fact that they were still providing $130 million to the coup regime. A good portion of the aid continuing to flow to Honduras is meant for HIV/AIDS prevention, food distribution, and other programs that only benefit the poor that the Honduran oligarchs care so little about. Yet millions of dollars are also flowing to provide "election assistance," as if free and fair elections could be held under martial law. Incidentally, the electoral aid is being channeled through many of the same organizations – such as the National Endowment for Democracy, the International Republican Institute, and USAID – that had been used by Bush Jr. to funnel money to the men behind the abortive 2002 coup d'etat in Venezuela, and the money was being sent to Honduras' Supreme Electoral Tribunal, the very organization that provided the bizarre legal justifications for the coup. Meanwhile, Lanny Davis, a former aide to Bill Clinton who went to bat for Hillary during the last election, has begun lobbying for recognition of Micheletti's de facto government in Washington.

Davis seems to have been successful. Elections were held in late November during a state of emergency. Several television channels were taken off the air in the weeks leading up to the vote, and 30,000 troops were deployed to the streets of the capital in order to "maintain order." Over 40 politicians withdrew their candidacy when they realized that the elections were a sham and not the return to democracy they had been hoping for. For their part, Honduran voters cast 250,000 blank votes. The Organization of the American States, the United Nations, and the European Union all refused to endorse the elections, although the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the National Endowment for Democracy assured the world press that the vote would be free and fair.

Only the US, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, and Peru recognized the elections as legitimate. Zelaya, who had been sheltered by the Brazilian embassy during the months following the coup, was magnanimously offered exile in place of arrest by incoming President Porfirio Lobo. Meanwhile, the National Resistance Front soldiers on with strikes and campaigns of nonviolent civil disobedience, and is currently planning to organize Zelaya's planned Constituent Assembly on their own.

It's still too early to tell what this all adds up to, at least in terms of Washington's role, which still remains murky and somewhat schizophrenic. Government officials at times call for the return of Zelaya and at others praise a clearly fraudulent election.

But it is clear what effect the coup has had on the people of Honduras. The months since the coup have seen the baseball stadium of capital city Tegucigalpa turned into an open-air prison, the use of rape as a political weapon, assassinations, and disappearances. Reporters from Telesur, and Venezolana de Television were arrested and thrown out of the country.

And in a move that hinted at the true aims of the military takeover, the embassies of Honduran allies Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela were occupied by Honduran troops, who arrested their staff and abandoned them in remote areas of the country, sometimes without shoes, sometimes without clothes. These countries, together with Ecuador, Bolivia, and formerly Honduras, make up the leftist Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA).

In order to understand current U.S. policy towards the Bolivarian countries, we must turn our focus to Colombia, which may be on the verge of war with Venezuela and Ecuador.

Much has been made of Obama's decision to cancel construction on a series of proposed U.S. bases in Eastern Europe, as if this move represented the beginning of the end of US global military reach and the dawn of a new era of cooperation with the rest of the international community. In reality it was an attempt to appease Putin, who had charged that Bush was attempting to encircle his country, in order to win Russian support for U.S. efforts to isolate Iran.

But when the treaty that allowed U.S. military bases in Ecuador expired last year, leftist President Rafael Correa declined to renew it. As a result, the State Department sought out a ten-year lease on seven Colombian military bases this past October – a move which has provoked outrage in every other capital in South America. The alliance between Colombia and the United States is a scandal in itself, as the former country is a known human rights violator - Colombia ranks second in the world in largest internally displaced population, behind only Sudan - but it is a bipartisan scandal that has been decades in the making. What makes the new military pact so suspect is its potential to escalate Colombia's counterinsurgency campaign against its Marxist guerrilla movements into a regional war. Just as the Afghan war has simply pushed the Taliban into Pakistan's frontier provinces, Colombia's bloody civil war has, over the past two years, led to a series of border skirmishes with Venezuela and Ecuador.

Given this background, Hugo Chavez has declared the deal to be a "pact of war" and demanded that the U.S. immediately withdraw from Colombia. Colombian ex-President Ernesto Samper concurred, arguing that increased conflict with Venezuela was a possibility as a result of the military deal.

"I would say we are in a pre-war situation," Samper said. "The poorly managed issue of the bases, Venezuela feels threatened by the bases, the government signs on to the bases without a public discussion of the issue, and all this starts to accumulate...the situation can harden and reach extremes."

Both countries have already begun preparations for war. Just before the new year, Chavez claimed that Venezuela's National Guard had spotted unmanned drones flying over his country, which Colombia denied possessing. Of course, both parties could be bluffing.

"I know some people in the Venezuelan government and some of them take it seriously, and some don't," said Peter Bohmer, a political economy professor at the Evergreen State College, who has traveled to the country since Chavez came into power. "I do see a chance of continued border skirmishes, but it's like with the United States, Colombia and Venezuela have bad relations but they also do a lot of trade with each other."

He thinks that it may be an attempt to undermine Venezuela's government by forcing them to shift their budget from social programs and development to military spending, but finds the prospect of war unlikely. Venezuela is the linchpin of the Bolivarian project, as its nationalized oil industry funds many of the alliance's development projects. If the government falters there, it could derail much of the Latin American left. But like in Honduras, it is too early to tell where events in Colombia and Venezuela are heading at this moment. The most important thing is to remember that despite Obama's rhetoric for international cooperation on an equal footing, and despite the changing international situation marked by the decline of U.S. power, the government bureaucracy that has favored intervention in Latin America's affairs for the past hundred years is still very much in place.

The rest is up to us.

Report from Tegucigalpa, Honduras

by Bruce Wilkinson

I stood on the bridge overlooking the National Resistance Front march in Honduras and as far as I could see in both directions were the people with no end. They kept coming. They came from all over Honduras to say goodbye to their leader and hero Mel Zelaya the President. The president had been trapped inside the Brazillian embassy in Tegucigalpa, the capital, for 5 months. There he endured all manner of hardship from the military surrounding the building who blasted high pitched acoustic weapons and tear gas amongst other lesser indecent actions. The people came to wish him a temporary goodbye while they struggled onward.

Back at the stadium in Tegucigalpa, Pepe Lobo was sworn in as president. It was the success the coup wanted, their guy in power with an even stronger rightwing congress after the other political parties boycotted the last elections. The boycott kept roughly 65% away from participating according to human rights groups on the ground. The actual number of ballots cast is impossible to figure out since no international observers were on the ground.

The people cried and cheered for Zelaya as they found themselves in an untenable position of seeing their president go and having a fraud fill his place. The military and mafia run this country, rule of law does not exist. Lobo was from the ultra right wing Nationalist party who ran on the promise of Christian Humanism, a concept that apparently allows for the use of rape, disappearance, assassinations and torture. The official numbers assassinated are 38 proven some dramatically with heads removed or showing signs of torture and multiple stab wounds. The actual numbers some say, may be five times that amount.

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A decade in review

Protest films and music of the 2000's

by Brendan Funtek

As the 2-K-O decade concludes, an instant cultural reflection is an obsessive trait among listmakers and categorizers posing as authors. One reasonable assumption in looking back through these articles and from your own memory is how stunning the decade was for protest films and how underwhelming it was for protest music.

This decade produced a remarkable collection of issue films that easily trump the 1980's and 1990's output and can stand comfortably with arguably the greatest decade in film overall – the 1970's – in exploring issues of injustice. We'll look through some of the highlights just in case you missed a few.

In relation to another art form seen as commodity, the music scene didn't produce enough memorable moments in protest for a decade that sorely needed it. Musicians/artists made numerous noteworthy statements, notably culminating when artists gathered to protest the use of music itself as torture at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and other global locations of the U.S. renditions program. However, the music of the decade wasn't as immersed in conventional protest music as every decade since the 1960's and we'll explore why along with asking some local community members along the way.

Why did this happen? If there's any industry where financial barriers and dominant status quo ideologies persist and continue to grow larger in preventing an auteur from expressing their uncompromised message, it's film, right? We know this because tens of films have told us so through clever in-the-industry satires and we can read all these troubling stories about well-known international films struggling for basic U.S. distribution.

To refute this author's enthusiasm, some people associated with local left movements weren't too impressed with the films of this era and still see Hollywood as a reflection of the passive status quo.

"Have you ever seen *South Pacific*? It's a musical," said Seth Manzel, co-founder of the anti-war GI coffeehouse Coffee Strong. "It was socially progressive at the time. It was about this woman who falls in love with a man and then she finds out he's been sleeping with islanders. So he was tainted by their non-Caucasian (selves). But she's progressive and she's willing to overcome her prejudice and willing to be with this guy despite the fact he's been with these (islanders). It was probably pretty progressive for it's time.

"*The Last Samurai*, the actual story was amazing (in) what happened. But they couldn't tell that story. They had to get the white guy who saves the people. But in reality, what actually happened was a much better story. In Hollywood, they always have this nationalist thing."

"Hollywood is very rarely radical," said Joseph Carter, a military veteran and volunteer at Coffee Strong. "Films in other countries are so much more radical...good films are politically conscious and talking about what's going on in the future. But a lot of films are opportunistic and try to capture the discourse."

A casual primer

Some remarkable films came out throughout the decade providing startling, direct messages about politics and society. To what extent these movies were seen is another issue but if you missed them, they're here for you whenever. Here's a laundry list with queue provokers included:

We can begin most recently with *Avatar*, a phenomenally lucrative film that in spite of poor writing and stereotypical plot sequences corresponding with Manzel's point, managed to bring up an audacious science-fiction parallel toward the global colonialist treatment of indigenous people, Vietnam-like resistance and corporations as guiding forces for war and resource stealing.

Dystopia science-fiction gave us plenty to ruminate upon. *Children of Men* conjured a species extinction of a childless future that throws you thick into a flaky radical left movement combating unhinged fascism, the film drew vivid parallels toward the modern-day brutality of immigrants and the innocent people swept up in state terrorism. *District 9* gave us an astonishing, unprecedented first half of storytelling that showed the ugliness of gentrification and racism by subordinating unknown, vulnerable aliens seeking help and displayed man's fascination with conquering/war before it turned into a bang-bang action flick. *28 Weeks Later* gave us an obvious U.S. foreign policy example of dealing with international crisis such as the film's viral outbreak in London: shoot and control first, think of solutions later.

Sleep Dealer deals with the privatization of resources, the lure of militarism and technology as a way to perpetuate our debasement as workers. Although the Mexican workers never have to cross the U.S. border in this film (instead remotely operating machines located in their northern exploiter), plenty of movies dealt with the modern, grim reality of life on the U.S.-Mexico border. *Sin Nombre*, *Babel* and *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* provided vivid, unique stories of human perseverance and struggle along the border travels that artistically refute the asshole politicians from the U.S., ignorant of their own nation's history, who continue to criminalize immigrants.

Excellent historical films provided lessons for the future by offering unflinching looks at the societal toll of state surveillance (*The Lives of Others*), reasons why revolutions begin and struggle to maintain (*The Wind That Shakes The Barley*), the systematic concessions forced upon ethnic groups down the path of state-sanctioned genocide (*The Pianist*), the complexity of foreign intervention in a world supposedly attuned to global peace and support (*Hotel Rwanda*), the brutality of state police impatient with nonviolent alternative solutions (*Bloody Sunday*), the futility of war courageously shown from the perspective of those fighting the U.S. (*Letters From Iwo Jima*), solid biopics of Che Guevara (*The Motorcycle Diaries*, *Che*) along with interpretively devastating character portraits of actual capitalists (*There Will Be Blood*, *American Psycho*), which eschewed the tired formula of symbolic Mafia films that make poor attempts at audience sympathy.

And although the following films have obvious flaws that are reflective of the Hollywood machine that delivered them to us in the first place, they nonetheless gave us crumb-sized food-for-thought in multiplexes around the nation: the awkward, confused response of the US to a terrorist attack (*United 93*), the CIA's creepy process of pulling out strangers in foreign lands and imprisoning them as 'terrorists' (*Rendition*), corporate media's problems with the concept of investigative journalism (*State of Play*); George Clooney's well-meaning attempts as producer in dealing with issues such as corporate media (*Good Night, and Good Luck*), the oil trade (*Syriana*), corporate corruption and violence (*Michael Clayton*) and superfluous US military operations (*The Men Who Stare at Goats*); a panoramic, interweaving view of racism in society (*Crash*); and the 1999 Seattle protests of the WTO (*Battle in Seattle*).

Before we clumsily bypass an overview of the entire era's output of documentaries for the sake of brevity, I should add a feature film that easily could have been a doc but opted not to be. *Fast Food Nation* intelligently opted to dramatize the events that took place in the book by weaving in multiple story lines, showing the corporate neglect and self-imposed naiveté of how fast food companies function along with thoughtful portrayals of the workers involved in both production and output, and people who feebly resist such an enormous industry. The book's author specifically resisted the documentary conversion and likely brought his work to a larger audience from the star-studded cast that carries the film.

The abundance of documentaries

As for the documentaries, the historical lens will likely focus upon Michael Moore films and then everything else although there's a tremendous selection to choose from.

"(There were) a lot of really good documentaries," said Adam Hardaway, a merchant of downtown's Rainy Day Records. "This was the decade of documentaries. They became easier to produce with digital video. There's probably too many documentaries."

The four releases of Moore's conventional narrative documentaries were a cultural event, particularly with the gross box office peak of *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

Among political films that stood out for Andrew VanDenBergh,co-founder of Coffee Strong and Marine veteran, what was significant about *Fahrenheit 9/11* was "the fact that that movie got such wide play...it was such a huge thing so soon after the (Iraq) invasion."

"That was in 2004 that that came out," said Carter. "I watched that with buddies on a field mission. We were ready to go back on (tour) a second time. I watched that on my platoon sergeant's DVD players. We were all about it."

Moore reached an intriguing conclusion about his role in society while interviewed in the superb 2004-released documentary *The Corporation* by addressing the paradox of working within the predominantly capitalist industry of film. Moore saw himself as fitting into the old saying of a rich man will sell you the rope to hang himself, if he thinks he'll make a buck off it.

Some remarkable films came out throughout the decade providing startling, direct messages about politics and society. To what extent these movies were seen is another issue but if you missed them, they're here for you whenever.

"Well, I'm the rope. I hope. I'm part of the rope. And (the elite) also believe that when people watch my stuff, or maybe watch this film, or whatever, they think that they'll watch this and they won't do anything because we've done such a good job of numbing their minds and dumbing them down."

Moore's final film of the era, *Capitalism: A Love Story* addressed directly the problems of living in a capitalist society and he made public comments after its release that he was probably through with documentaries (he felt he had said everything he could say) and would look at potentially working on feature films.

Realities of marketing

Throughout the era in music, very little happened from any massive cultural ephemera standpoint to reflect the frustrations so many people reached during the Bush era from obvious topical points such as the PATRIOT act or the ugly federal neglect for properly handling the disaster of Hurricane Katrina.

Musicians made statements such as the aforementioned collective response to music as U.S.-sponsored torture or in famous quotes like hip-hop artist Kanye West's "George Bush doesn't care about black people" during a nationally televised 2005 benefit concert for Katrina. (That comment was responded to in song by hip-hop artist Killer Mike in "That's Life": "The comment Kanye made was damn near right. But Bush hate poor people, be 'em black or white." The entire verse surrounding this line more thoroughly condemned the Bush family.)

"In this decade, there has been a lot of protest music but none of it's been commercial, none of it's became popular," Hardaway said. "Protest music is not commercially viable [...] because the corporate music industry during the Bush era was even more tightly controlled and the radio (too). And MTV stopped. That directly affected music sales at the height of the CD era. The music industry became very, very conservative during this decade and they decide what sells. You can't always make something sell but nothing sells without the push. A lot of it is marketing and advertising."

One example of this "push" in the negative was what happened when a group stepped outside the bounds. The Dixie Chicks suffered a severe backlash in the inexplicably dominant industry of mainstream country music for criticizing Bush this decade during their European tour in 2003. The three musicians reacted to the death threats and protests of their music by instead becoming more explicit with their message in songs on their 2006 follow-up album, well-received internationally.

The hokeyness

An understandable illusion that one could fall into is assuming the Internet has subsequently opened up the potential for musicians to express themselves without needing approval from their record company. Yet this doesn't seem to account for the massive perception problem of the concept of protest music.

"I don't think it's not there," Carter said about protest music. "I think it's either so hokey that no one wants to buy it or it just comes across as disingenuous."

"It's not new, so it's not commercialized," VanDenBergh said. "In the (19)60's, it was this new political phenomenon. Then people made money off it and it became commercialized. There was plenty of protest music in the (19)80's, it was just all hardcore bands, explicitly non-commercial."

The 1980's also laid the seeds for a cultural stigma against socially conscious music with retrospectively pretentious and repeatedly parodied engagements such as Bob Geldof's Live Aid and megastar collaborations like "We Are The World" (which has since been recently announced to be remade by current artists for Haiti).

"That was the baby boomers. They really believed they could change the world," Hardaway said of that era. "It's important and your responsibility to do that. The younger generation is cynical and see the hypocrisies."

For example, the complex scrutiny associated with Geldof's modern attempt at another mainstream phenomenon concert in 2005 for rallying awareness at the G8 summit ("Make Poverty History") was appropriate. Who was receiving the money for this fundraiser and was the event drawing away attention from effective, ongoing international protest? Even the recent well-meaning fundraisers for Haiti deserve some level of critical questioning.

Expression over explanation

At this point in our lives, ideas and moments take precedence over literally worded protest music. M.I.A. is undoubtedly the most relevant political artist of our era. Her music itself represents a refutation of nationalist ideas by encompassing as many global styles as possible with only passing, infrequently direct references of what to overcome in the lyrics alone. But in interviews and through

acupuncture is pretty cool.

http://2kensmith.blogspot.com/
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ken smith, l.ac.

simple assertions of individuality, such as performing live while nine months pregnant on a nationally televised program, M.I.A. definitely has a revolutionary persona.

In the lead up to producing her second album, M.I.A. was denied a visa into the United States perhaps due to a vague association with a father whom she's barely known involved in an indigenous rights movement against the Sri Lankan government. Her 2007 album "Kala" was a byproduct of that rejection.

"If America turned round and said you can't come here to make money and work with our producers then we go 'well you know what, you've just wished upon yourself the worst thing, I'm gonna go and put African people, Muslim people on the record and that's the scariest shit to you.' You just amplify whatever it is they're scared of, and that's what I wanted to do," M.I.A. said in a Drowned in Sound interview.

"M.I.A. is really awesome in how you can incorporate that into your music in a way that's actually fun," Hardaway said of her impact relative to other conscientious artists. "Especially at the height of the Bush era, a lot of people were vocally upset about things but not much good music came out of it."

Aside from the quality of the music itself, what has been historically considered protest music might have no choice but to be reevaluated and seen under a broader context of its expression and distribution (i.e. how it reached us). A dedicated participant of the underground music scene both locally and internationally, Tobi Vail posted this on her blog Jigsaw Underground (jigsawunderground.blogspot.com) in November:

"I think the concern now, is to get people in bands to stand for something and to stand together against multinational corporations, global capitalism and consumer culture. How can we use independent-punk-underground music culture as a site of resistance? How do we define ourselves in opposition to the mainstream, when the mainstream is everywhere?"

Music and the act of creating and sharing it is undergoing a potentially profound transformation. With these changes, we can hope some facet of protest reflective of our collective experience is retained through that process. With films, hopefully a greater number of movies is made with wide exposure and acceptance/debate/provocation, since this concluding decade established an excellent precedent upon which to build.

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Supreme Court in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission threatens American democracy

By Marco Rosaire Rossi

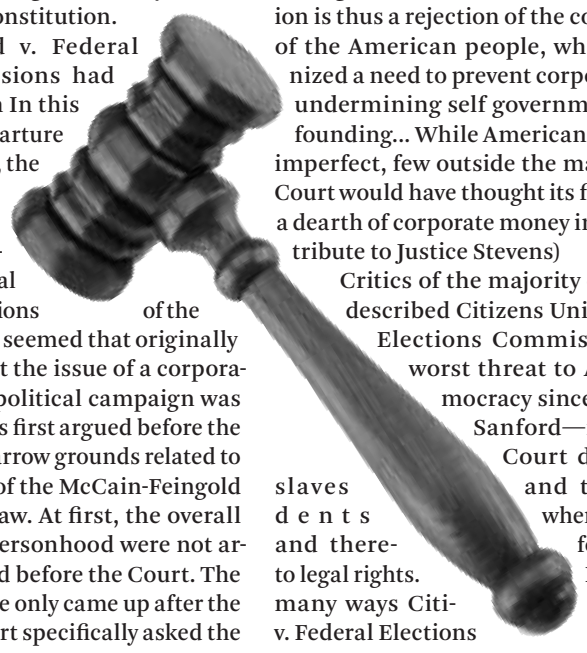
On January 21, 2010, American democracy was struck a serious blow. The United States Supreme Court, in its 5-4 decision in Citizen's United v. Federal Elections Commissions, confirmed three legal principles that threaten the remaining vestiges of American democracy. The first is that corporations are legal persons and entitled to greater rights as living United States citizens; next, that monetary contributions to political campaigns are considered a form of political speech and therefore protected under the First Amendment; and finally, that any law that attempts to restrict or limit the power of corporations in the political arena is a violation of the constitution. In someways the ruling was a result of a consistent legal evolution to gradually grant for-profit corporations more power and freedoms. In other ways though, it was a radical departure that demonstrated the Court's current conservative "activist judge"nature and its eagerness to manipulate cases to produce certain ideological objectives.

Legal scholars generally point to the Supreme Courts' 1886 decision in Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad as the beginning of corporate personhood in US law. The case itself was not a complicated manner—involving minor tax issues—but the lawyers for the railroads used the idea that corporations should be considered full citizens under the constitution to support their arguments that taxing corporations at an different rate as individuals was discriminatory. In the late 1880's, the idea that the Fourteenth Amendment, originally intended to protect the recently liberated African-American population, also applied to for-profit corporation was a fringe idea.

In the ruling in Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad, the court never explicitly stated its support for corporate personhood. However, Brancroft Davis, the court reporter at the time, did suggest the idea at the heading of the ruling when he wrote a contradictory statement indicating that the Court was not going to decide on the issue of corporate personhood because they had already decided that they were in agreement that it existed. Notes by court reporters have never been considered precedent in US law. Nevertheless, in the early 20th century that idea Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad supported corporate personhood formed within the American legal consciousness. Between 1886 and 1910 there were 307 cases that dealt with the constitutionality of the Fourteenth Amendment, of those 19 were cases involving African-Americans, while the remaining 288 involved corporations testing the limits of their personhood. Soon Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad set precedent for other cases, and those cases set precedent for still other cases, until corporate personhood had become so established in American law that the actual wording of Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad did not matter.

The expanding of corporate rights continued through First National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti in 1978. Building off precedent already set two years earlier in Buckley v. Valeo—where the Court ruled that money spent on political campaigns is considered a part of freedom of speech, the Court decided that the corporations do have a constitutional right to freedom of expression, and that this is extended to their monetary contributions to political campaign. A government prohibition on corporate spending essentially amount to censorship, and a violation of the First Amendment.

Though both Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad and First National Bank of Boston v. Bellotti have expanded the idea of corporate personhood, the Courts have always expanded it with reservations. Corporations are considered persons under the law, but they are acknowledged as being "artificial persons" whose rights and privileges are not always absolute. Generally, the law has accepted that corporations main activity is economic, and therefore their power and influence in political campaigns can and should be limited. This is especially the case with campaign funding. The Court has consistently ruled that complete and full prohibition of corporate funding in politics is a violation of the First Amendment, but at the same time it has acknowledged that some regulation of campaign funding is necessary for a functioning democracy and in harmony with the constitution.



Citizen's United v. Federal Elections Commissions had changed that notion In this way it is a radical departure from precedent. In it, the majority established that any intervention into corporate expenditures on political campaigns is a violations of the First Amendment. It seemed that originally no one assumed that the issue of a corporation's right to fund political campaign was at stake. The case was first argued before the Supreme Court on narrow grounds related to certain application of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law. At first, the overall issue of corporate personhood were not argued before the Court. The issue only came up after the Court specifically asked the parties to represent these issues so that it could be decided upon. It is clear now that the majority of Justices used the case as an opportunity to declare—in the words of Justice Kennedy—that "Government may not suppress political speech based on the speaker's corporate identity."

> No election can be considered fair when access to the information is solely determined by wealth... those with the greatest wealth will have the loudest voice, and be able to suppress dissent not through repression but by simply drowning it out.

But speech is not the issue, and it never has been. The issue is money. The question that the majority ignored was this: how can democracy thrive when its foundation—free and fair elections—is uprooted? No election can be considered fair when access to the information is solely determined by wealth. In any situation, those with the greatest wealth will have the loudest voice, and be able to suppress dissent not through repression but by simply drowning it out. The point was best articulated by James Madison in 1822: "A popular government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy, or perhaps both."

The dissenting opinion was quick to point out not only the judicial manipulation but the legal maneuvering and back-flips of the majority. Justice Steven openly accused his colleagues of changing "the case to give themselves an opportunity to change the law." He referred to the majority opinion as "absurd." Acknowledging the troubling situation that the founders seemed perfectly able to make a distinction between a living person and a corporation, while the current make-up of the Court found the idea incomprehensible. He attacked the fundamentally anti-democratic character of the opinion, noting that "At bottom, the Court's opinion is thus a rejection of the common sense of the American people, who have recognized a need to prevent corporations from undermining self government since the founding... While American democracy is imperfect, few outside the majority of this Court would have thought its flaws included a dearth of corporate money in politics." (attribute to Justice Stevens)

Critics of the majority opinion have described Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commissions as the worst threat to American democracy since Dred Scott v. Sanford—in which the Court declared that slaves and their descendents where not citizens, and therefore for not entitled to legal rights. Indeed, in many ways Citizen's United v. Federal Elections Commissions is the political inverse of Dred Scott v. Sanford but with the similar devastating outcomes. In one case, legal rights were forcefully withheld from a minority population in order to privilege the majority; in the other, legal rights are being vacuumed from the majority and propelled onto a minority of "artificial persons." In one case a people's humanity is restricted, in the other case the humanity of corporations is being overextended. Both maintain a form of slavery. In Dred Scott's situation it was the actual slavery of the southern plantation aristocracy. Today it is the slavery of our political institutions over a well-funded, well-organized, and extremely class conscious corporate elite. For both situations, the observations of President Abraham Lincoln in his letter to Col. Williams F. Elkins at the close of the civil war is revealing:

"We may congratulate ourselves that this cruel war is nearing its end.... It has indeed been a trying hour for the Republic; but I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. As a result of the war, corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed."

Marco Rosaire Rossi is a former Olympia resident and frequent contributor to WIP.

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Valentine's Day dedication to : **hali panneton**

You will be dearly missed and we wish you nothing but the quickest road to recovery and the best of health. Our heart goes out to you and we all owe you a big hug for your years of dedication. Love, the WIP staff.

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